

Making the Transition to Postsecondary

KY Tech area supervisors join together to create opportunities through KentuckyCAN Mini Grants

Many of us have graduated from high school, earned a college or technical degree and gone on to enjoy a successful career. Some of us have also helped guide, or, are in the process of guiding younger family members through the rungs of academic successes, pre-college counseling and/ or college registration - *just like our parents or a responsible adult did for us*. But, what if we hadn't had that guidance? Would we have known what to do to get into college? Or even how to proceed? Think about this because it brings us front and center to a statewide problem - a sector of Kentucky's population doesn't have a clue about how the process of getting into college works. It's sad, but true.

The good news is changes are occurring on multiple levels. One such level is where all three Kentucky Tech area supervisors have joined together to create real opportunities for students and their parents to learn how the college process works through three \$2,500 mini grants funded by the Kentucky College Access Network (KentuckyCAN). Their connected plans will unfold beginning this fall.



But, how did this come about? Kentucky Tech area supervisor Mary Stratton has been the catalyst. She has been an active member of Greater Louisville's Campaign for College Committee for the past year. This committee was formed as a result of a grant that Greater Louisville Inc., the HIRE Education Forum and Louisville Metro Government received from Wired65.

One major initiative of the Campaign for College Committee is a program called Close the Deal, which creates a college-going culture, provides support for and creates a sense of urgency on the part of students applying for college and builds "college knowledge" that helps students make informed choices about their futures. This program was piloted at Valley High School (Jefferson County Public Schools) in 2008 and expanded to 11 schools in 2009.

Formed by Mayor Jerry Abramson, in partnership with the HIRE Education Forum – an affiliate of Greater Louisville Inc., the committee's major focus is to help kids make the transition from high school to a postsecondary institution. A major priority has been to connect the dots - including the mayor's office, Jefferson County Public Schools,

HIRE Education Forum, Greater Louisville Inc., Kentuckiana College Access Center, Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), Metro United Way and the Department for Workforce Investment, Kentucky Tech system of schools.

Bringing agencies together to explore possibilities has helped connect more dots. People have begun to understand how shared responsibility can make a difference in helping students make the transition to postsecondary – when specifically targeted at the local level – on the front line.

Stratton was asked to participate as a member of the Close the Deal committee by Dr. Mary Jones, KCTCS-Jefferson Campus director of institutional effectiveness. Her major role has been to bring the Kentucky Tech area technology centers forward in the initiative.

Stratton was originally referred to Jones by JCTC-Carrollton Campus Director Susan Carlisle because of the work she had done in Carrollton between the KY Tech area technology center and KCTCS.

Read the following “making the transition” good news stories:

“Stratton and Zachery conduct dual credit session during Jefferson Community and Technical College –Carrollton Campus Open House”

“Jointly marketed dual credit and newly developed cohort project successfully launched for students transitioning from Shelby Co. ATC to JCTC”

Based on the Shelby Co. and Carroll Co. transition projects, a viable footprint for others to follow was available – one where students and parents experienced varying levels of success because the local educational systems acted responsibly. As a result, Stratton went in search of funding to help kick-off a statewide version of the plan.

Through her contacts on the Close the Deal Committee, she met Mr. Joe McCormick, director of KentuckyCAN and Karen Napier, the associate director for Resource Development. When Stratton informed them about the successes students experienced at both Shelby Co. and Carroll Co, Napier introduced her to the KnowHow2Go Mini-grants for 2010. According to the KentuckyCAN website, <http://www.kentuckycan.org/>, “These grants are designed to build upon existing efforts of the KnowHow2Go initiative to improve college access in the local community.”

Stratton contacted Kentucky Tech area supervisors Linda Floyd and Barney Judd so they could offer ideas and partner in drafting a grant.

“I want to give credit to both Linda and Barney. Their willingness to become involved strengthened the grant. Based on our collective work, they each submitted a grant to secure funding for their respective service area,” said Stratton. “I also want to recognize our Office of Career and Technical Education budget branch supervisor Emily Hehl. She was instrumental in helping us create the right budget for the proposal and we appreciate her expertise.”



Photo (l to r): Kentucky Tech area supervisors Linda Floyd, Barney Judd and Mary Stratton

The collaborative efforts paid off. Each area supervisor was recently awarded a \$2,500 *KnowHow2Go mini grant* to help students “make the transition to postsecondary.”

Stratton:

“We want to raise an awareness of who we are, what we do and how Kentucky Tech is important in the overall high school experience – both in terms of dual credit and articulation to a postsecondary institution. In my opinion it is critical, for parents as well as those in the general public, to have a better understanding of how valuable Kentucky Tech classes are in preparing for a skilled career and how we link to postsecondary opportunities.

“Secondly, we need to capitalize on what we did at the KY Tech-Shelby Co/KCTCS-Shelby Campus meeting. One of the biggest barriers we broke was helping parents understand the whole package including what programs were offered at the local campus, the admissions process, how to apply for financial aid, KEES money, and learning about the course credit that would transfer from the ATC to KCTCS. Many parents were shocked at how much credit their son or daughter earned while in high school. It meant a savings of not only time, but money. And, in these hard economic times, that resonated well among the parents.

“In many cases, the parents had not gone to college themselves and all they needed was someone to take them by the hand and lead them through the process. It worked.”



Mary Stratton
KY Tech area supervisor

The Kentucky Tech area supervisors plan to pool their \$2,500 grants for a total of \$7,500. The plan is to use the grant funding to promote the *how to* in “making the transition to postsecondary” and enrolling in college at the local level. The Shelby and Carroll meetings will be used as a footprint to plan regional meetings on a statewide basis. Each agrees that the most important piece of the plan is to create the face-to-face local contact between the students and their parents, and with the postsecondary institution. Consistency and continuity in marketing the initiative is something each area supervisor wants to achieve. When the meetings begin this fall, all postsecondary institutions including KCTCS, and public and private technical colleges and universities will be invited to participate.

Judd:

“There is a large percentage of career and technical education students whose parents have never been to college, so this opportunity provides those students and parents with a chance to learn about and understand the processes involved in getting to college. We believe this helps parents help their children. Through this process, we are trying to break barriers and help them overcome fears.

“Kentucky Tech is finally getting to the level of seamless education because our students can receive dual credit and articulation opportunities – which are selling points in getting more students enrolled in a postsecondary institution.”



Floyd:

“Kentucky Tech has the connections through statewide dual credit agreements. Therefore, funding from KentuckyCAN will not only help students to make the transition to postsecondary, it will also help promote our Kentucky Tech programs.

“In our minds, the advantage is to help parents overcome a stigma. When they begin to understand how the process works, they will learn that a college education is in reach. They will learn that their child can go to college just like everyone else. The ultimate winner is the student and that’s why we are in business.”



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